

Object-relations is a psychodynamic theory of child development and involves the unconscious internalizing of archetypal images of early childhood caregivers. It originally emerged with Ferenczi in 1917 and was later expanded during the 1940s and 50s by Klein and Winnicott. It is one of three Enneagram triads (Harmonics and Hornebian are the other two).

The object-relations triad has three dominant affects:

- attachment,
- frustration, and
- rejection,

which are aimed at

- the nurturing function – the mothering archetype of wanting mirroring, to be seen, validated, loved;
- the protective function – the fathering archetype of wanting attachment to things or people who provide guidance, guidelines, orientation, structure, and how to function in the world;
- or both.

9-3-6 are the **attachment** types having to do with a sense of contentment that their needs are being met through people or things they perceive as good and to which they are able to adapt.

- 3 (heart) is attached to the nurturing function of being seen.
- 6 (head) is attached to the protective function of being guided.
- 9 (body) is attached to both, which speaks to how "absorbent" 9s are. Double attachment.

1-4-7 are the **frustration** types. Their sense of self is based on a constant search for the ideal. They seldom get what they believe will make them happy, and even if they think they do find it, they become disappointed and disillusioned.

- 7 (head) is frustration with the nurturing mother figure. They look for nurturing but can't find it because they don't know what it really is.
- 1 (body) is frustration with the protective father figure. They want the protection and guidance they never got, so they attempt to create their own rules, structure and guidance for themselves, which only frustrates them.
- 4 (heart) is frustration with both. Since they were neither seen nor shown how to function in the world, they search and search for themselves and lament they can't function. Double frustration.

2-8-5 is **rejection**. They feel that their needs were rejected, so they 'pre-reject' themselves and their needs and believe that all that is left is for them to offer a gift or talent, via their Center (body, head or heart), in order to prevent future rejection.

- 8 (body) is rejection of the nurturing function and identification with the protecting function. They offer the gifts of their male archetypal strength and willpower.
- 2 (heart) is rejection of the protective function and identifying with the nurturing function. They offer the gift of their female archetypal soft heart.
- 5 (mind) is rejection of both; they don't know how to be in the world, and they are uncomfortable with seeing their own needs. They offer the gift of their mind and data. Double rejection.